

The City of Sheboygan will be celebrating Arbor Day on April 28th.

All over the world, people will be planting trees in their yards and their communities, caring for them and learning about their value. Here in the United States, we call this tree planting festival Arbor Day.

In 1872 the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture accepted a resolution by J. Sterling Morton "to set aside one day to plant trees, both for forest and fruit." With this first tree planting holiday celebration, J. Sterling Morton became known as the Father of Arbor Day. Today, Arbor Day is celebrated in all 50 states and around the world. Arbor Day became a holiday in Wisconsin in 1883 and is celebrated on the last Friday in April.

Each year the City of Sheboygan's Public Works Department prepares for Arbor Day by submitting a Proclamation to the Mayor and Council proclaiming the last Friday in April as Arbor Day. The department has worked with community and school groups to promote the planting and care for trees on that day. In recent years the Park and Forestry crew have worked with Wilson Schools planting trees on the school property, Sheboygan Leadership Academy planting trees in Fountain Park, and this year the celebration will be held at Maywood Environmental Park with the Grant Elementary Great Lake Gang, Environmental Club.

In 1976 the Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters, launched the Tree City USA program. The City of Sheboygan has the honor of being recognized as Wisconsin's longest running Tree City USA Community. In fact, this is the 39th year in which Sheboygan has been given this honor. This City looks forward to celebrating Arbor Day in 2018 as Wisconsin's first 40 year Tree City USA Community.

For the past 39 years the City of Sheboygan has met the requirements to be a Tree City USA Community. The minimal Requirements include; having a city tree board, having a community tree ordinance, maintaining a community forestry program with an annual budget of a least \$2 per capita, and observing Arbor Day each year. The Sheboygan Department of Public Works is responsible for the City's public trees and goes well over the minimum standards to retain their Tree City USA status. There are approximately 22,000 street trees and many more park trees that are cared for by DPW. Last year the City Council accepted the Sheboygan's first Urban Forestry Management Plan. This plan was written with the aid of a DNR Urban Forestry Grant. The city also received two tree planting grants for 2017, \$10,000 from Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission and \$25,000 from the DNR Urban Forestry Grant.

Trees provide a financial benefit. Part of Sheboygan's Urban Forestry Management Plan consisted of an "i-Tree Analysis". Sheboygan street trees provide millions of dollars of environmental, economic and aesthetic benefits to our community. Over their lifetime, street tree benefits exceed the costs of planting and care, representing a 300 percent return on investment. Tree benefits increase over time highlighting the importance of not only planting trees, but of providing ongoing maintenance and protection. These benefits are a reminder of the worthwhile investment in our community forestry program. Annually, Sheboygan public street trees provide: \$931,298 in storm water runoff reduction, \$115,812 in carbon dioxide reduction, \$1.1 million in property value increase, \$143,585 in air quality improvement, and \$840,140 in energy savings.

For homeowners, Arbor Day is an excellent opportunity to take stock of the trees on your property and plan for the future. Inspect your trees. Note any broken branches or evidence of disease or insect infestation. Think about how planting new trees might improve the look of your property or provide

wind or heat protection. Take a trip to your local nursery to see what's available and to get new ideas. If you have any Ash trees on your property it is especially important this year to decide if you are going to treat it for the Emerald Ash Borer or remove and replace with another tree. All Ash trees left untreated will be affected by the Emerald Ash Borer and die in the next four to eight years.

Celebrate this Arbor Day by caring for or planting a tree in your community.

Joe Kerlin
Superintendent of Parks and Forestry